

NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



STUDENTS DEBATE THE COST OF WAR

Junior class students at New Technology High School in Sioux Falls had the unique opportunity to study, research, and debate.

SDDVA Deputy Secretary Aaron Pollard and Program Manager Erin Bultje served as judges for their debate presentations and assisted the teachers in critiquing the material presented and their presentation skills.

"It is refreshing to know that today's youth are being challenged with considering the cost of conflicts that our men and women face as they fight for our freedoms and the freedoms of those around the world," said Deputy Secretary Pollard. "These students articulately presented arguments for and against conflicts that the military engages in. They did so in a manner that was respectful to "the other side" and to the men and women that serve."



Ashley Dickerson (daughter of SDDVA's Brett Dickerson) expressing her position.

Learning at Sioux Falls New Technology High School is designed around problems or projects intended to engage students in meaningful learning experience. Students are expected to master content and skills through the application of discovery learning and actively engaging research.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

VA Sports Grants.....	2
Veteran Healthcare Access	2
3-D Printing.....	3
Objective Zero	4
Vet Center Advisory Board.....	5
BHNC Honoring Ceremony.....	5
VA/NMSS Partnership.....	6
State Cemetery Update	7
PVA Fundraiser	7
Upcoming Events	8

VA GRANT FUNDING TO SUPPORT ADAPTIVE SPORTS

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced the availability of up to approximately \$15 million in grants for community organizations that provide adaptive sports, including therapeutic recreational opportunities for disabled veterans and disabled members of the armed forces.

The VA awards grants to qualifying organizations to plan, develop, manage and implement programs serving veterans.

The VA will make award decisions this fall based on a competitive selection. In fiscal year 2019, the VA awarded approximately \$9 million in Adaptive Sports Program grants to 103 organizations, estimated to serve more than 10,000 veterans throughout all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Details of the Notice of Funding Availability, including how to apply, can be viewed under the “Grant Program” tab online at [VA Adaptive Sports Grant Program](#). All submissions will be accepted online at www.grants.gov. The deadline for applications to be submitted is May 14.

BILL TO PROTECT VETERANS’ ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

U.S. Senators Mike Rounds and Joe Manchin (WV), members of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee, today introduced *the Elimination of the VA Asset and Infrastructure Review (AIR) Commission of 2019 Act*. If passed, this bill will eliminate the commission that is tasked with finding facilities that should be consolidated or realigned. Rounds believes this bill is necessary because rural healthcare is essential to many South Dakotans and the AIR Commission threatens the longevity of rural VA hospitals across the country. The AIR Act originally passed into law as a part of the 2018 Mission Act, despite the Senators’ objections.

“The Department of Veterans Affairs is long overdue for reforms, and I support VA Secretary Wilkie’s efforts to streamline processes to reduce the red tape veterans have to go through,” said Rounds. “However, I do not support the creation of a ‘BRAC-like’ commission that seeks out facilities to close down—with no input from Congress. In fact, it’s part of the reason I voted against the VA MISSION Act in the first place. In South Dakota, many of our veterans live in rural areas and the facilities they go to need to be improved, not closed down entirely. Our legislation would eliminate the commission so facilities like the Hot Springs Hospital can continue to care for our region’s rural veterans. I’m pleased to partner with Sen. Manchin on this issue, and I look forward to working with our colleagues in the Senate and our state’s veterans and Veteran Service Organizations to move it forward.”

Without this bill, the AIR Act would create a nine member commission tasked with conducting a comprehensive review of VA facilities and identifying where investments should be made as well as where facilities should be consolidated, realigned, exchanged, out leased, replaced, sold or disposed.

3D PRINTING PROVES MORE USEFUL

In keeping with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) efforts to improve health care services for veterans, Baltimore VA Medical Center (VAMC) doctors recently demonstrated how 3D printing at the VA is more useful for orthopedic surgeons in planning shoulder replacement surgery than current approaches.

In an article, published in the [Journal of Digital Imaging](#) on Feb. 28, Baltimore VAMC Drs. Eliot Siegel and Kenneth Wang described how CT scan images were used to create 3D printed models of the shoulder.

3D printing creates an object by using material that is layered on top of each other, piece by piece; also known as additive manufacturing. These models provided surgeons with a better understanding of each patient's specific anatomy, when compared with standard CT image review and with 3D visualization using a technique known as volume rendering. 3D printed models enabled surgeons to better appreciate the anatomic features which determine the best surgical techniques for a particular patient.

"It's great to see skilled professionals such as Dr. Siegel and Dr. Wang and their colleagues innovate to get better outcomes for veterans," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "Moving forward, the VA will continue to seek opportunities to further develop and apply 3D technology as it strives to embed innovation into the fabric of the organization."

Shoulder-replacement surgery is commonly performed to treat arthritis, which is a widespread condition among veterans and the general population. However, the small amount of bone at the socket side of the shoulder joint is a major challenge to the long-term durability of shoulder replacements. By allowing surgeons to better appreciate the details of each individual patient's anatomy, 3D printed models of the shoulder provide an additional tool for surgeons to use in pre-surgical planning, ultimately leading to longer-lasting shoulder replacements.



Through the VA's [Diffusion of Excellence Initiative](#), the use of 3D printed models for shoulder surgery being pioneered in Baltimore can have applications at VA medical centers with 3D printing capability across the country.

The success and application of the 3D printed shoulder models highlight just one of the cutting-edge innovations being driven by VA employees, and demonstrate how 3D printing is useful for presurgical planning. This work also underscores the drive to provide the highest level of VA care to veterans.

VA PARTNERS WITH OBJECTIVE ZERO FOUNDATION

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently partnered with the nonprofit [Objective Zero Foundation](#) to aid in connecting veterans with suicide prevention support and resources.

The partnership, formalized on Dec. 3, 2018 provides a shared goal of preventing suicide among service members and veterans, with a special focus on service members transitioning out of the military.

Objective Zero offers a free mobile app that instantly and anonymously connects veterans, service members, their families and caregivers to suicide prevention resources and a nationwide community of peer supporters via text, voice, and video chat. The foundation, enhances social connectedness among veterans and improves access to mental health and wellness resources.

“At the VA, we are working to prevent veteran suicide by using an approach that looks beyond our traditional health care settings,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “Our partnership with Objective Zero is an integral part of reaching veterans where they live, work and thrive, and we are looking forward to working more closely with them.”



Objective Zero Co-founder and Executive Director Betsey Mercado said her foundation was proud to partner with the VA to improve the well-being and mental health of veterans.

“Joining efforts with this community provides better access to resources and highly needed support for the men and women that have served and sacrificed so much for our country,” Mercado said.

The VA has a suite of mobile mental health apps that offer information about mental health issues, tools to help develop and practice coping skills, and assessments that allow users to track progress over time. Learn more at www.ptsd.va.gov/appvid/mobile. The Objective Zero app can be downloaded at <https://www.objectivezero.org/app>.

Veterans who are in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, and those who know a veteran in crisis, can call the Veterans Crisis Line for confidential support 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Call 800-273-8255 and press 1, send a text message to 838255 or chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat.

SIoux FALLS VET CENTER NAMES NEW ADVISORY BOARD

To better serve veterans and their families, a Vet Center Advisory Board is now in place at the Sioux Falls Vet Center. Vet Center board members will serve for 18-month terms, at which time new members will be invited to serve on the board. The board will meet quarterly to discuss ways to improve Vet Center services and to work together as community partners to fill any gaps in services across their service area. The current service area for the Sioux Falls Vet Center spans across all counties of South Dakota that are East of the Missouri River.

Current members of the Vet Center Advisory Board include: Craig Bennett, Davison County VSO; Geri Opsal, Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate TVSO; Jade Ronk, SSVF Cornerstone Mission; Mike Maske, Sioux Falls VTC Mentor Coordinator; Susan Irons, Lincoln County VSO; Paul Miller, VOA—Dakotas Director of Veteran's Service; Erin Brown, SDDVA Program Manager and the Sioux Falls Vet Center Team.



The first meeting was held on March 22, 2019. During this meeting, the following items were discussed:

1. Use of telehealth to expand services.
2. Creating a shared "Network" directory of resources for veterans/families.
3. Increasing Vet Center outreach and education.
4. Vet Center services and eligibility.

BHNC TO HOST MILITARY HONORS CEREMONY

The Black Hills National Cemetery will host its quarterly Military Honors Ceremony for Unaccompanied Veterans on Monday, April 1, 2019 at 9:00 am (MT). This ceremony provides Military Funeral Honors to those veterans interred at the cemetery over the previous quarter, who did not have honors at the time of burial. The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA) and VFW Post 1273 will be performing honors.

The ceremony will be held at the BHNC Committal Shelter (20901 Pleasant Valley Drive) in Sturgis.

VA AND NATIONAL MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS SOCIETY JOIN FORCES

As part of the U.S Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) efforts to advance and improve the lives of veterans living with multiple sclerosis (MS), the department announced its recent partnership with the [National Multiple Sclerosis Society](#).

The partnership, formalized on March 6, will continue to build upon the [VA's national network of MS clinical services, education and research](#).

VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said the VA is committed to working closely with veterans and their caregivers, community health care professionals, MS advocates and veterans service organizations to identify new and innovative ways to support this initiative.

"MS can be an overwhelming challenge for those who are fighting the disease and their loved ones who care for them," Wilkie said. "The VA recognizes and values the strength of collaborations with our external partners, which can help increase access to care and lead to a more fulfilled quality of life."

The VA and the National MS Society seek to enhance health services, education, self-efficacy and promote whole health goals of veterans and their families, by sharing certain resources and collaborating on policy, educational and research initiatives.

"Veterans living with multiple sclerosis need our support," said Cyndi Zagieboylo, president and CEO of the National MS Society. "This agreement is a very clear commitment from the federal government and the society that we are here for them — and will be here for them."

According to the [National MS Society](#), nearly one million people are living with MS in the United States. Approximately 20,000 veterans with MS are cared for annually in the Veterans Health Administration. With the 2003 establishment of VA's MS Centers of Excellence, veterans and their families have access to a

national network of regional and support programs to improve their diagnosis and treatment.

For more information about VA's National MS Centers of Excellence, visit [VA Multiple Sclerosis](#).



I'm a Veteran with MS... and I'm talking about it!

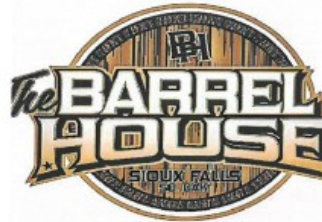


STATE CEMETERY UPDATE

Ownership of land donated by the City of Sioux Falls has been transferred to the State of South Dakota. The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs has been working closely with numerous state agencies, our design firm Stockwell Engineers and the National Cemetery Administration, on the schematic design of the SDVC.

Journey Construction has been selected as the Construction Manager at Risk for the project. Journey will work with the Department to make the best use of the grant dollars received for the project and ensure that the project is completed on budget and in a timely manner.

The SDVC is on schedule. Currently, the SDVC is in the sixty-five percent design phase. Ground could be broken on the project in late 2019. It is estimated that the SDVC will take twelve to eighteen months to complete once construction begins.



**Come join us at The Barrell House
on Monday, April 15th from
11:00 a.m. until closing!**

**The Chapter will receive 10%
of the food/beverage sales.
Stop out and have some great food
while supporting a great cause!!**

**All proceeds from the event will stay local
and support our programs and services that
we provide to our Veterans and other individ-
uals with disabilities**

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mar 29—Vietnam Veterans Open House—DAV Headquarters—Sioux Falls—1:00—3:00 pm (CT)
Mar 29—Vietnam/Vietnam Era Veterans Reception—SFVAHCS Front Foyer—4:00 pm—6:00 pm (CT)
Mar 29—Black Hills National Cemetery Vietnam War Veterans Day commemorative ceremony—Interment Shelter—9:30 am (MT)
Apr 6—State MOPH Convention—Rapid City DAV (101 E. Madison Street) - 1:00 pm (MT)
April 12—Purple Up for Military Kids
Apr 13—Boots to Business Reboot—Zeal Center of Entrepreneurship (2328 N. Career Ave.) - Sioux Falls—8:30 am—4:30 pm (CT)
Apr 19—State Offices Closed
Apr 20—SFVAHCS Whole Health Class—Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street) - 9:00 am—11:00 am (CT)
Apr 22—State Offices Closed
May 7—MidWest Honor Flight Welcome Home Ceremony—Sioux Falls Convention Center—7:45 pm (CT)
May 7—SDDVA Mini Conference—TREA (1981 Centre Street)—Rapid City—10:00 am—3:00 pm (MT)
May 8—SDDVA Mini Conference—Post 8 American Legion (520 S. Pierre Street)—Pierre—10:00 am—3:00 pm (CT)
May 9—SDDVA Mini Conference—VFW (3601 S. Minnesota Avenue)—Sioux Falls—10:00 am—3:00 pm (CT)
May 14—Bill Casper's Annual WW II Luncheon—TREA—Rapid City
May 17—Veterans Honor Concert—State Veterans Home—Hot Springs—2:00 pm (MT)
May 17-19—DAV Convention—Hilton Garden Inn (5300 S. Grand Circle) —Sioux Falls
May 18—SFVAHCS Whole Health Class—Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street) - 9:00 am—11:00 am (CT)
May 27—MJFSVH Memorial Day Car Show—Hot Springs—2:00 pm (MT)
Jun 13-16—VFW State Convention—Dakota State University—Madison
Jun 15—SFVAHCS Whole Health Class—Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street) - 9:00 am—11:00 am (CT)
Jul 17—South Dakota Veterans Council—PVA Headquarters—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)
July 20-24—National VFW Convention—Orlando, FL
Jul 20—SFVAHCS Whole Health Class—Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street) - 9:00 am—11:00 am (CT)
Aug 3-6—DAV National Convention—Orlando, FL
Aug 17—SFVAHCS Whole Health Class—Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street) - 9:00 am—11:00 am (CT)
Aug 29—Veterans Day at the Fair
Aug 26-29—SDDVA Benefit School
Sep 21—SFVAHCS Whole Health Class—Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street) - 9:00 am—11:00 am (CT)

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer

South Dakota Department of the Military <http://military.sd.gov>

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov>

Soldiers and Sailors Building - 425 E Capitol Avenue

Pierre, SD 57501

Phone: 605-773-8242

E-mail address: audry.ricketts@state.sd.us

